

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Page 5, please amend paragraph [22] as follows:

[22] Embodiments of the present invention comprise forming a composite capping layer, comprising three layers, on inlaid Cu. The first layer is a thin layer of  $\beta$ -phase Ta, as at a thickness of 25Å to 40Å, e.g., 40Å. A second thin layer of tantalum nitride having a thickness under 300Å, such as 20Å to 100Å, is then formed on the thin layer of  $\beta$ -Ta. A layer of  $\alpha$ -phase Ta is then formed on the thin tantalum nitride layer, the  $\alpha$ -phase Ta layer having a thickness of 200Å to 500Å. The layer of tantalum nitride facilitates the formation of the  $\alpha$ -phase Ta. The layer of tantalum nitride has a rather high resistivity of 400 micro-ohm-cm, a thickness ~~on~~ of only about 20Å is needed to set the crystal structure of the subsequent  $\alpha$ -phase Ta layer.